



GREATER SUNRAYSIA FRUIT FLY GOVERNANCE GROUP

MEETING 7 • 27 AUGUST 2020

Due to COVID-19 and its associated restrictions, the Greater Sunraysia Fruit Fly Governance Group meeting on the 27 August 2020 was held online.

Membership

The group welcomed Zarmeen Hassan from AusVeg. Zarmeen is a temporary member until AusVeg Victoria fill the State Manager position that was left vacant by Tom Cohen.

Review of the Greater Sunraysia Fruit Fly Governance Group terms of reference

The current terms of reference (ToR), expired on the 30th June 2020. The Governance Group members reviewed the ToR to update and amend where required. Based on the discussions the following amendments will be made to the terms of reference and they will be circulated to the members for endorsement.

1. An invitation will be extended to Summerfruit Australia to nominate a representative to the group. Summerfruits Australia is the National association, the local body 'Swan Hill Summerfruits Development Association' currently holds two positions on the group. Both the citrus and table grape industries have representatives from their National bodies Citrus Australia and Australian Table Grape Association respectively.
2. The Term of Appointment to be extended to 30 June 2021.
3. A provision for 'out of session' meetings if
4. required will be included.
5. The meeting length will be capped at two hours.
6. The meetings will be held online.

Agriculture Victoria State action plan

Cathy Mansfield the Agriculture Victoria Statewide Fruit Fly Coordinator noted that a review of the Managing Fruit Fly in Victoria Action Plan 2015-2020 is expected to occur in the next six – eight months. It is expected that consultation will occur online due to current COVID-19 restrictions. Further information will be available shortly.

Queensland fruit fly regional update.

Lauren Donaldson, from Agricultural Victoria provided an update on Qfly numbers within the GS PFA. Overall numbers in the region are low, this is to be expected in winter as the flies are less active and are unable to fly with the cold conditions.

Recent NSW/Victorian border closure have resulted in some issues with surveillance. There was a brief period when a number of NSW monitoring traps were unable to be checked, this has now been rectified.

Sterile Insect Technique presentation

Bishwo Mainali from Macquarie University was a guest at the meeting and provide an update on the Sterile Insect Technique to the members.

Bishwo is an Applied Entomologist with extensive experience in research on fruit flies. Currently, his work focuses on the spatial and behavioural ecology of fruit flies, and major operational elements of the Sterile Insect Technique.

Bishwo provided an overview of the recent trial of Sterile Insect Technique that occurred in Cobram, Victoria and Hillstone in New South Wales in 2019/20. The results of the trials still need to be analysed, however there were some promising preliminary results.

Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Regional Coordinator 2020/21 work plan

Narelle Beattie Regional Coordinator for GS PFA, provided a brief overview of the Regional Coordinator 2020/21 work plan, which was circulate prior to the meeting.

The group discussed that the review and updating of the Greater Sunraysia Regional Action Plan will now occur in March 2021. This revised schedule will enable the plan to align with the State Action Plan due for completion in early 2021.

The impacts of COVID-19 and the associated restrictions on the GS PFA program delivery were discussed. It was highlighted that there has been a significant impact on community engagement. The GS PFA usually attends field days, markets, community events and meetings to increase the knowledge and awareness of Qfly. Staff have also been unable to undertake cold call visits to residents within areas with high Qfly activity. Like most organisation the GS PFA are investigating options to continue to engage with the community whilst implementing COVID-19 safe practices.

The GS PFA team has redesigned the website to provide a better experience for the community and increased access to Qfly information.

Promotion of the availability of Field Officers to assist the community in Qfly management is being completed. Webinars and YouTube videos are being planned to allow continued engagement with the community.

National fruit fly council update

Christina Cook the manager of the National Fruit Fly council joined the meeting to provide an update on the council activities.

The draft National Fruit Fly Strategy 2020-25 has been circulated to industry and government representatives. The strategy is also accompanied by an Implementation Plan 2020-21.

Endorsement of the Strategy will be sought at the next National Biosecurity Committee meeting in mid-September. The strategy will then be provided to Plant Health Australia and Hort Innovation and forwarded to the Agriculture ministers. It is envisioned the strategy be officially launched in October 2020.

The National Fruit Fly Council are planning to hold a national fruit fly conference in April/May 2021. Further details will be provided closer to the date.

With the inability to hold face-to-face workshops, the Council has commenced a series of webinars to raise awareness of national fruit fly activities. The first webinar was held on the 17 August 2020 presenting research to strengthen Australia's fruit fly system. The next webinar is planned for September and an invitation is extended to all Governance Group members to attend.

Governance Group Membership.

As per the terms of reference all memberships and positions within the Governance Group were dissolved as of 30 June 2020.

All organisations have been requested to nominate their representatives to the group for 2020/21. This process is still underway and the full membership and results of the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair will be reported at the next meeting.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for
November 2020.

